



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 16, 2018

Dr. Angi Williams, Superintendent
Galena Park Independent School District
14705 Woodforest Boulevard
Houston, TX 77015

Jeff Miller, President
Board of Trustees
Galena Park Independent School District
14705 Woodforest Boulevard
Houston, TX 77015

Via FedEx Overnight Mail and E-Mail

RE: Request to Cease and Desist Unlawful Electioneering

Superintendent Williams and President Miller:

It has come to our attention that the Galena Park Independent School District recently published statements and resolutions advocating for the election of certain identified candidates. For example, the Principal of one of your schools distributed from his official e-mail address an e-mail from a political candidate. The e-mail from the political candidate expressly noted that "[f]orwarding this email would be considered a violation so please do not forward from district email or device." (emphasis added). However, the Principal said this:

Colleagues, I agree that we need to support Scott Milder in his quest to become the Texas Lieutenant Governor. He is a former GPISD employee during Dr. Neeley's superintendency. Remember, to ask for Republican Ballot, you can vote in Texas in the primaries for a Republican or Democrat. Let's support Scott Milder. Please tell all of your friends and family this is critical. Joe



JOE COLEMAN, Ed.D.

Principal
353 N. Castlegory Road
Houston, Texas 77049
832-386-4105
jcoleman@galeneparkisd.com
"Building The Future"

Knowing that what he did was wrong, the Principal then alerted Executive Director for School Administration, Tammy Pankratz, and the Administrative Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent for Educational Support & School Administration, Kenneth Wallace.

I probably broke some type of rule with this email, probably not good judgement. I have not had a complaint but just letting you know in case you get one. Joe



JOE COLEMAN, Ed.D.

Principal
353 N. Castlegory Road
Houston, Texas 77049
832-386-4105
jcoleman@galenaparkisd.com
"Building The Future"

The information received by our office does not reflect any form of reprimand to Principal Coleman or instructional e-mail to other employees about the error committed by Principal Coleman.

This evidence reveals that these communications were made on behalf of the School District as a government entity, acting in its official capacity, and using resources that belong to the taxpayers of Texas.

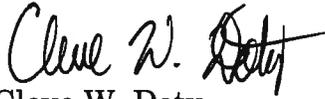
As you know, Texas law empowers local school districts to register students to vote, promote civic engagement, and allow high school students to serve as early voting clerks. *See, e.g.,* Tex. Elec. Code § 13.046; Tex. Educ. Code § 25.087. By creating such a statute, the Legislature recognized the vital role educators play in the functioning of a democracy.

However, like all other governmental authorities, Galena Park ISD has limits on its participation in the political process and the use of taxpayer resources meant for the education of Texas's youth. Like all state authorities, school districts "may not use state or local funds or other resources to electioneer for or against any candidate, measure, or political party." Tex. Educ. Code § 11.069; *see generally* Tex. Att'y Gen. Op. No. KP-0177 (2018). Furthermore, school districts and their employees "may not knowingly authorize the spending of public funds for political advertising," which includes "a communication supporting or opposing a candidate for nomination or election to a public office or office of a political party, a political party, a public officer, or a measure" whether via e-mail, an Internet website, or official Board action, among other things. Tex. Elec. Code §§ 255.003(a), 251.001(16). The Texas Legislature chose to undergird the importance of governmental entities, like Galena Park ISD, not engaging in unlawful electioneering; it not only prohibits such actions, but classifies violations as a Class A misdemeanor. Tex. Elec. Code § 255.003(c).

As mentioned above, your district promulgated and published numerous communications directed for or against candidates and measures. *See* Enclosures. By advocating for change in political representation, Galena Park ISD produced "a communication . . . opposing a candidate for nomination or election to a public office or office of a political party." This communication violates Texas law. *See* Tex. Elec. Code §§ 255.003(a), 251.001(16).

Accordingly, we ask you to withdraw the above noted communications, as well as any like communications, and cease from making any further communications designed to support or oppose certain political candidates, or which may otherwise run afoul of Texas law. We request that we hear from you, in writing, no later than the end of business on Wednesday, March 21, 2018.

Sincerely,



Cleve W. Doty
Assistant Attorney General
Administrative Law Division
Cleve.Doty@oag.texas.gov

Enclosures

cc: Wanda Heath Johnson, Board of Trustees
Dawn Fisher, Board of Trustees
Wilfred J. Broussard, Jr., Board of Trustees
Joe Stephens, Board of Trustees
Ramon Garza, Board of Trustees

Monday, February 5, 2018 8:20:35 AM
From: Joe A. Coleman
Scott Milder <scott@scottmilder4txlg.com>, Internet
Scott Milder <scott@scottmilder4txlg.com>, Internet
Subject: Fwd(2): Open Letter to Texas Educators View in Browser
To: Tammy Pankratz Kenneth Wallace

I probably broke some type of rule with this email, probably not good judgement. I have not had a complaint but just letting you know in case you get one. Joe



JOE COLEMAN, Ed.D.

Principal
353 N. Castlegory Road
Houston, Texas 77049
832-386-4105
jcoleman@galenaparkisd.com
"Building The Future"

----- Original Message -----

Colleagues, I agree that we need to support Scott Milder in his quest to become the Texas Lieutenant Governor. He is a former GPISD employee during Dr. Neeley's superintendency. Remember, to ask for Republican Ballot, you can vote in Texas in the primaries for a Republican or Democrat. Let's support Scott Milder. Please tell all of your friends and family this is critical. Joe



JOE COLEMAN, Ed.D.

Principal
353 N. Castlegory Road
Houston, Texas 77049
832-386-4105
jcoleman@galenaparkisd.com
"Building The Future"

----- Original Message -----

 [View this email in your browser](#)



 d6b78a90cfc/images/abc142aa-bf20-4469-aa34-a66d3678794e.jpg

(NOTE: Receiving this email or any email at your district email address is not a violation of any law.)

Forwarding this email would be considered a violation so please do not forward from district email or device.)

Dear Texas Educators and Staff,

The ugly truth is you, your profession, and your students are being targeted by a handful of state legislators and their wealthy funders. **They don't want to pay taxes to fund public schools.**

- **They don't want to pay taxes to properly fund your medical insurance and retirement.**
- **They don't want to pay taxes to educate a majority-minority, low-income student population.**
- **And, they most certainly DO NOT want you to vote.** What they do want is to continue their efforts to defund and dismantle Texas public schools.

One person is organizing this war against Texas students and educators. He leads a handful of billionaires and legislators working against you and the will of the rational masses who value their public schools.

Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick is Public Education ENEMY No. 1. He is up for re-election on the March 6, 2018 Republican Primary ballot, and he has a pro-public education challenger. That challenger is yours truly, Scott Milder, founder of Friends of Texas Public Schools and long-time public education advocate.

With more than 1.2 million active and retired educators connected to TRS -- plus spouses, family and friends -- we can vote Patrick out of office. We only need a few hundred thousand votes! Although not all educators are Republicans, open primaries in Texas allow any registered voter to vote in either the Republican or Democratic primary. Simply ask for the Republican ballot when you go vote.

Following are ways you can help to mobilize the educator vote: Join the **RED DOT for SCOTT** Campaign! Place red dot stickers on your nametags and phones to remind everyone to go vote for me in the red (Republican) primary.

- This email is being sent to only 100,000 educators of the 700,000 working in our schools. Please spread the word to all your educator friends and family across Texas! (Please use personal email and devices, not district's.)
- Encourage colleagues to vote early on February 20, or anytime February 20 through March 2. Find early vote locations [here](#).
- Collect personal email addresses from colleagues and send to me at ScottMilder4TXLG@gmail.com.
- Follow me on Twitter [@smilder](#) and on Facebook [@ScottMilder4TXLG](#), and encourage others to as well.
- Visit www.ScottMilder4TXLG.com for more information about me and this election. Let's retire Dan Patrick on March 6th and send a bold message to all present and future elected officials: **Don't Mess with Texas Public School Educators!** There will be consequences on Election Day.

▣ **Scott Milder**, FOUNDER, Friends of Texas Public Schools
Rational Republican for Lt. Governor

www.ScottMilder4TXLG.com | Twitter [@smilder](#) | Facebook [@ScottMilder4TXLG](#)

REPUBLICAN PRIMARY
***ELECTION DAY* - TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2018**
VOTE EARLY - February 20 - March 2



Political ad paid for by the Scott Milder for Texas Lieutenant Governor Campaign.

Copyright © 2018 Elect Scott Milder for Texas Lieutenant Governor
You are receiving this email because you are a supporter of Texas Public Schools.

Our mailing address is:
Elect Scott Milder for Texas Lieutenant Governor
P.O. Box 1252
Rockwall, TX 75087

 [Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can  [update your preferences](#) or  [unsubscribe from this list.](#)

[Translate](#)[Sign In](#)

Galena Park

Independent School District



Exercise Your Right to Vote, Now!

The General Election is Tuesday, March 6, 2018 and early voting runs Tuesday, February 20th – Friday, March 2nd.

Exercise your right to vote and make your voice count.

Educational Resources

TexasEducatorsVote.com is a call for all educators and school employees to vote and includes a pledge to support pro-public education candidates.

TeachTheVote.org focuses on education issues, and presents voting records, candidate surveys and relevant third-party endorsements.

TexasTeachersVote.org allows educators to become more informed and active by determining which candidates are running in particular areas and provides their contact information; as well as, information on how to get involved prior to the election.

League of Women Voters - Texas Voter Guide is a nonpartisan and unbiased list of candidates in contested races. It provides answers to questions posed by the League of Women Voters.

Texas Parent PAC is a bipartisan political action committee for parents, grandparents, parents-to-be, and anyone who supports high-quality public education. Endorsed candidates reflect traditional mainstream American values that honor and support children and their families, quality public education, strong communities, unlimited opportunities and maximum citizen participation in our democracy. All endorsed candidates support the Texas Parent PAC Guiding Principles.

Where to Vote During Early Voting February 20th - March 2nd

Voting during the early voting period couldn't be easier or more convenient! Registered and eligible voters may vote at ANY early voting location located in the county of residence. Learn more.

The stakes are high, and educators and community members CAN make an impact when they vote!

Election Resources

TexasEducatorsVote.com

TeachtheVote.org

TexasTeachersVote.org

[League of Women Voters](#)

[Texas Parent PAC](#)

Early Voting Locations

[Locations for Early Voting](#)

FAQ on Early Voting

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Identification Requirements

[Photo ID Rules](#)

Galena Park

14705 Woodforest Boulevard
Houston, TX 77015

Phone: 832.386.1000

Follow Us



[Equal Opportunity Employer](#) [Copyright](#) [Contact Us](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Back to Top ↑](#)

[Questions or Feedback?](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Blackboard Web Community Manager Privacy Policy \(Updated\)](#) Copyright © 2002-2018
Blackboard, Inc. All rights reserved.